

“IN THE GARDEN WITH HIM”**NO. 2106****A SERMON****DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 8, 1889,****BY C. H. SPURGEON,****AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

“One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, said, Did not I see you in the garden with Him?”

John 18:26

PETER was on dangerous ground. When his Master was being buffeted, he was trying to make himself comfortable. We read of the high priest's servants, that they warmed themselves, and Peter stood with them and warmed himself; he stood with them, and they were rough servants of ill masters. He was in bad company, and he was a man who could not afford to be in bad company—for he was so impulsive and so easily provoked to rash actions.

The Holy Spirit, having notified us once that Peter was on unsafe ground, in the words, “Peter stood with them and warmed himself,” especially observes that he remained there, which was worse still. Any man may inadvertently stumble upon a boggy piece of ground; but if he is a wise man, he will make every effort to pass it, and be on sound soil again. He does ill to linger upon a quagmire, for thus he toys with danger and courts destruction. The Holy Spirit has recorded it further on, in the twenty-fifth verse, a second time, “Simon Peter stood and warmed himself.” Take heed of abiding in the place of danger! You may be called in providence to go through the Campagna when it reeks with malaria, but you are not called to live there; if you have to cross a sea, cross it, but do not try to cast anchor in mid-ocean and thus keep your ship continually amid the billows. Where there is peril there should be a prudent haste. Quick! Pilgrim, be quick and tarry not in the place of danger! The enchanted ground may lie on the road to the Celestial City, and therefore it may be your duty to traverse it with anxious speed; but if you sit down in it—if you take your rest in any of the arbors there provided by the evil prince, you may sleep yourself into no end of misery. Linger no longer in the wilderness than you are forced to do—hurry through the enemy's country, and rest not till you are in Immanuel's land.

Voluntary continuance on evil ground leads to repeated temptations. First the maid, then several men, and last of all this kinsman of the man whom he had wounded, began to try Peter in the high priest's hall; they put to him questions which led him to deny that he ever was a disciple of the Prophet of Galilee. The longer you stop in an evil place, the more numerous will your temptations become. Temptations are like flies—they come one or two at the first, but by-and-by they buzz about you in swarms. When the deadly arrows from Satan's bow fly in such showers, it ill becomes you to be at ease; while you tarry on dangerous ground, your weakness increases. Peter, who might at first have acknowledged his Master, did not do it, but denied Him; having once denied Him, it was almost inevitable that he should do the same again. And so, again and again, he said, “I know not the man.” And as the weakness increases and the sin gains force, the fault deepens in blackness. Thrice he denied his Master, and in the end he added oaths and curses, as if it would be a sure proof that he had never been with Christ if he could swear. One distinguishing mark of a Christian in those days was that he swore not at all, by any oath of any sort, upon any subject, good, bad, or indifferent! Thus Peter, seeing that he could profanely swear, was giving good evidence, as the listeners thought, that he could never have been with Jesus of Nazareth.

And so, dear friends, you see the reason why, when you come near the place of temptation, you should hasten by it as quickly as possible. Linger not where the plague rages—stay not where temptation abounds. While Peter was getting increased velocity *into* sin, he was losing all his strength to get *out* of sin. Why, at the very first, when he had denied his Lord to the maid, he ought to have crept away into a secret place and wept, or more bravely still, he should have rushed right through the crowd up to his dear Master yonder, and have said, “Forgive Your servant for his treachery and cowardice.” But no, he

perseveres in the falsehood he has spoken. He adds lie to lie, and sinks deeper in the mire; left to himself, his course is downward and there is no hope for the deserter.

The lesson of this is—again I say it—hasten out of the place of temptation; flee from it as speedily as possible. There are some who are in positions of life which they ought to give up—positions which are sinful and cannot be held by persons who are honest, truthful, and chaste. It is of no use to try to fight the battle of the cross where some people are—they are harnessed to the chariot of the devil and they must come out of it, or be driven to destruction. If they are engaged in a trade which, in the very essence of it, is bad, let them get away from it. If they are in associations which are distinctly sinful, they must break loose from those associations and not pretend to be Christians. Talking the other evening with a young girl who has, I trust, escaped from the grosser sin into which she might soon have fallen, I said to her—“There are three things you can do, and those three things I will set before you by an illustration. When you get outside the Tabernacle, there will be a tram car; now, go up to the car and put one foot on the car and keep the other foot on the ground, and if you do not come down with a smash I am very much mistaken. Yet many people try to keep in with the world and keep in with Christ, and they will never do it—but will make a terrible fall of it before long. Now, the second thing that you can do is keep standing in the road in the mud, and not get into the car at all. You can stop there and let the tram car go by—that is all fair and straight. If you want to live in the world and be of the world, well, live in the world, and be of the world, and take what pleasure it can give you, and reap the fruit of it at last. But there is a third thing you can do, namely, get right off the road into the car, and let the car take you right away where it is going.” Now, it is this third thing that I commend to each of you. Get right into Christ, and let the Lord Jesus, by the power of His Holy Spirit, carry you away from the unclean place where you now stand, bearing you in safety along the tram-lines of holiness till He brings you to the terminus of glory at His own right hand. May the Lord deliver you from halting between two opinions or choosing the wrong opinion; and may He now grant you divine grace to leap into the gospel chariot and leave all sinful company and doubtful ways behind, so that you may acknowledge the Lord Jesus, and be His true disciple!

So much concerning Peter, and the mischief that he fell into.

This brings me to consider one of the questions which led Peter into his denial of his Master. It is this question, “Did not I see you in the garden with Him?” Let us try to handle that a little; and may the Lord cause it to do us as much good as once to Peter it did harm!

I. And the first thing I say about it is this—MANY OF US HAVE HAD SPECIAL ASSOCIATION WITH OUR LORD. If any were to ask us, “Did not I see you in the garden with Him?” we should right gladly answer, “Yes, you have probably seen me; for I have often been there.” We are by no means ashamed to admit that we have been much in the company of the despised Redeemer. Let us think how we have been, many of us, associated with our Lord Jesus Christ—it will do us good to consider our close connection with our Well-Beloved Lord.

The large proportion of the friends present tonight has been associated with him in church fellowship. Our names are on the church roll as belonging to Jesus. We voluntarily and cheerfully first gave ourselves to the Lord, and afterwards to His people, according to His word. Some of us have had our names enrolled among baptized believers for many years, and we are right glad to have them there. May they never be erased by any shameful act of ours; but there may they stand until that day when the church rolls of earth shall all be swallowed up in the muster roll of the redeemed above! It is no small thing, to my mind, to have my name in the family register of God—

*“Recorded in some humble place
Beneath my Lord the Lamb.”*

Yes, so far as the church is concerned, we have been “in the garden with Him”; for the church is the garden wherein He walks and takes delight.

In consequence of this, we have been associated with our Lord in fellowship of worship. When His name has been praised, we have praised it. When solemn prayer has been offered in His name, we have said, “Amen.” How many times have those of us who are in the period of middle life been gathered in His name in the great congregation! We have thousands of times expressed by word of mouth, and I trust, with our inmost hearts, our solemn union with our divine Lord. This we have testified at the foot-

stool of grace, when we have been adoring the Most High in private, at the family altar, and in the more public assemblies of believers. Several thousands of times we have been “in the garden with Him” in the early morning, and in the cool of the day, and on happy Sabbaths without number.

Many of us have gone further than this. We have been baptized into His death, and thus we have solemnly declared that we are dead with Him, and have also risen with Him. Even more solemn still, if anything can be more solemn, we have eaten and drunk at His table and the viands have been nothing less than His flesh and blood, representatively set forth in broken bread and the fruit of the vine. What sweet communion we have had with our blessed Lord at His table! I am sure I could not tell you, and I think you could not tell me, how very near our Well-Beloved has been to us. As I heard a newly-converted one say the other day, in simple accents, “There has been a mysterious mix-up. He has come into me to build me up and I have been as joined to Him as if I had eaten His flesh and had drunk His blood.” This is a very, very solemn business. If it has been true, it is solemnly delightful. If it has been false, it is solemnly ruinous. I know of nothing that can minister more to our condemnation than to have falsely avowed such a union with Christ as that which is set forth in the holy supper. I pray that we may not be found mere pretenders. In a hundred acts of church life we have been in the garden with Him—in fact, we have professed to be part and parcel of His mystical body. We have received others into our fellowship and we have sent them forth to other churches in the name of Jesus. We have prayed with them as they have gone forth, as missionaries to the ends of the earth, to proclaim that same adorable name. We have been one with our Lord in acts of worship and fellowship and service. We count it our privilege, honor, and delight that it has been so.

But then, dear friends, we have, some of us, been associated with Him in a yet higher sense still—I mean in distinct open testimony. We have preached His name—we have borne witness to the truth of His word. We have pleaded with others; as though God did beseech them by us, we have prayed them, in Christ’s place, to be reconciled to God. We have proclaimed, in Christ’s name, mercy to the chief of sinners. And we have felt His power working with us, so that what we bound on earth was bound in heaven, and what we loosed on earth was loosed in heaven. So much have we been identified with the Lord Jesus, that when, in the preaching of the word, we declared the remission of sins to those who sought the Savior, they did seek Him and their sins were remitted. The Lord made us to be girt with His own solemn power and to stand in the place of His risen Self. What an association with Christ has this been! Others of you, beloved, have been associated with Him in teaching the children. And you have come very near Him, for He said, “Allow the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not.” You have brought the young to Him, and He has smiled upon you while you have been bringing them. Oh, yes, you have been associated with Christ in visiting the sick, and those in prison, in instructing the ignorant, in bringing in the wandering, in cheering the faint. You have taken upon yourself, by His grace, this holy ministry, each one according to his ability; and thus, in the most practical ways, you have been “in the garden with Him.”

Yes, and to go further still, you have not only been associated with Him in *service* but also in *suffering* for His name’s sake. You had a battle to fight in your youth, against ungodly relatives and associates; and you fought it well for Christ’s sake; some of you godly women have had to bear a living martyrdom, ever since you have been married, through the ungodliness and unkindness of your husbands. Certain of you have been despised, ridiculed, and rejected with Christ, and for Christ. Oh, it is a glorious thing! Some of us know what it is to have our name cast out as evil and to have come down, in some men’s esteem, from the brightest heights to the darkest depths, solely and only because we will follow the Lamb wherever He goes, and will shake ourselves clear of the infidelity of the present age, which is defiling the visible church with its filthy leprosy. It is very sweet to be accounted a fool for Jesus! It is most joyful when one can go into his chamber and sing—

*“If on my face, for Your dear name,
Shame and reproaches be,
All hail reproach and welcome shame,
For You’ll remember me!”*

This is no small fellowship; and in this we have, many of us, possessed our full share. Yes, we can say that we have been in the garden with Him.

Once more—not only have we been with Him in church fellowship, in service, and in some small measure of suffering, but we have been with Him in secret. O beloved, we dare not tell that which we have enjoyed behind the veil with our all-glorious Lord. But we have been with Him, sometimes, in His joy, till whether in the body or out of the body, we could not tell—God alone has known! It would not have taken us any trouble to slip into heaven, we were so near the door and the door was so open. There would scarcely have needed to be a death, for we were already in the beginnings of the heavenly life. Our joy has been full when we have been in the garden with Him. We have also had a measure of fellowship with Him in His anguish, when we have groaned out our very soul to see the apostasy of His church. To see how those that should preach His gospel do not preach it, but preach the very reverse of it. We have felt as if it were better for us to die than to live when we have seen this exceedingly great evil. When the sins and iniquities of Christians have come under our eyes, and the name of Christ has been blasphemed, and the precious gospel has been despised because of the inconsistencies of professors, and the silly amusements of church members, we have been afflicted with our Lord. We have been with Christ almost in a bloody sweat concerning His base betrayal by His disciples. You know what I am talking of, some of you. The Lord does bring some of His people very near to Him, till they are in the garden with Him in an agony of soul for sinful men; there have you been made to know what you cannot tell, and to behold in your soul what no eye can ever see—and to hear in the heart that which shall never greet the ear of mortal man. Beloved, in these senses, you would be bound to confess your association with the Lord Jesus, and to say, “Yes, I have been in the garden with Him.”

II. Now I go a step further in the text. The question is, “Did not I see you in the garden with Him?” which leads me to observe that **MANY OF US HAVE BEEN SEEN OF MEN IN OUR ASSOCIATION WITH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.** We did not want to be observed—we were far from courting observation. There are some of the Lord’s people who would like to go to heaven without being seen with the Lord Jesus in the streets by daylight. They desire to be saved and yet never be seen with their Savior. I do not think that the sin of this age, with most Christians, is obtrusiveness. Far more likely it is unholy fear. Some think it modesty. But I question whether this is its real name. I will not call it *cowardice*, but I will take their own expression and call it backwardness. They say they are of a “retiring” disposition, which I interpret in a way very little to their credit. I have heard of a soldier who was of a very “retiring” disposition when the battle was on, and he retired with great diligence as soon as the first shots were fired. I think I heard that he was hung up as a deserter and a coward. No good comes of a retiring disposition of that kind. We have that sort of “retiring person” with us nowadays but such people will have to answer for it when the Lord denies those who denied Him!

But, without desiring to be known, dear friends, you that have been with Christ have been found out; and, first, you have been *seen* in the garden with your Lord by those associated in family life with you. It was not long before they discovered that you were a Christian. A man who carries in his hand a lot of roses will soon be known to bear it by the perfume which is scattered abroad. He that has divine grace in his heart needs not to advertise it. It will advertise itself. Mother finds out that there is something very different in John from what there used to be. Sister Jane finds out that Mary seems quite altered from what she used to be. Father discovers that Mother is so different from what she was a little while ago. Like water in a leaking vessel, religion oozes out. Love to Jesus is sure to be found out. Believe me, Christian brothers and sisters, your friends know that you follow Jesus; they have known it long, and they will yet say to you, “Did not I see you in the garden with Him?” You were observed at private prayer; you were noticed reading the Scriptures. At first you blushed to find it commended, or to find it blamed. You do not do so now, for you are aware that everybody knows it. If you have not been found out, I should think you have no divine grace to spare, for even a little true religion is spied out in these days.

And you, dear friends, have been found out by certain curious people that are always prying about. We do not admire them, but we can never get rid of them—certain persons from whom no secret can ever be hid. They seem to know things by instinct, and they tell them by compulsion—whispering them with the preface that nobody must repeat what they say—though they, themselves, take license to communicate the secret to everybody they meet. These tattlers soon find out that a man is a Christian and they speedily spread the intelligence, not always with pleasure—in some instances with malicious sar-

casm. They ferret out the fact of your change and when they see you, they sneeringly ask, “Did not I see you in the garden with Him?”

We have been found out, especially by those whom our holy faith opposes. Here was one that had come to take the Savior as a prisoner and he was the man to pitch upon Peter. “Did not I see you in the garden with Him?” Just so—and when you come out and bear witness against an error, or when your life bears hard upon evil conduct, you will assuredly be found out. Those who are on the other side will know you. I hope that they will have good reason for knowing you. I hope that they will oppose you very much, and thus effectually drive you out of their fellowship. There are two seeds in the world—the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. And if the seed of the serpent never hisses at you, you may be afraid that you do not belong to the seed of the woman. God has put an enmity between the serpent and the woman—between the serpent’s seed and the woman’s seed—and so it must be till the end of time. Take any opposition that you get from worldlings as a token for good—a sign that you are of a different race from those who despise you—a testimonial to your character from those whose homage to goodness embodies itself in persecution. “Oh, yes, yes,” these people will say, “Did not I see you at the meeting house? Did not I hear of your being with that canting crew? Are not you one of those vile hypocrites?” And so on. That is the way in which they compliment us. Do you know all the pretty things they say of your leaders? We are not spared by foul tongues. Oh, you that are common soldiers in the ranks, you may very well bear your portion of abuse; for if I heard you fretting, I should remind you that your leaders have had worse things to bear. Do you think that I lie on a bed of roses? Am I never opposed and slandered? I have my full, fair share of the world’s abuse. But I am ready for twice as much, if necessary. We are willing to be so publicly in the garden with our Master, that His enemies may quote it against us, if they wish, and sneeringly ask, “Did not I see you in the garden with Him?”

Especially will this be known to those who are affected by our procedure; the gentleman whose ear had been cut off knew Peter; so did his kinsman, who, to his alarm, saw a sword come so very close to his kinsman’s skull. He recognized Peter at once. And no wonder; it was only by the flash of one of those torches that he caught a glimpse of the disciple with the sword. But, as Peter cut off that man’s cousin’s ear, the impression made was particularly vivid. So, if you begin to talk about Christ to people, if you ask them whether they are saved, some of them will thank you for your holy anxiety. But others, who choose to feel annoyed, will judge that you wantonly tread upon their feet, and they will feel that you have assaulted them. Deal faithfully with their souls and they will photograph your portrait on the sensitive plate of a very angry nature. They do not want to see you any more. They “fight shy” of you, and so on; for they judge you to be very rude and personal. I hope that you will always have a little company of friends who will remember you by reason of their smarting ears. I do not invite you to cut their ears off—quite the reverse—rather heal their ears with a touch of Christ’s golden ointment. But at the same time, make their ears tingle with your warnings and entreaties; tell them about Christ crucified; and then, the next time they see you, they will say, “That is the man that spoke to me about my sin and my Savior.” Be recognized because of the earnestness of your concern for the salvation of others.

There are some of us—and a very considerable number of friends here tonight—who are known to have been in the garden with Christ by a vast number of persons. If some of you were to fall into grave sin and desired to hide yourselves, where would you go? Especially myself—where could I go? I could not go into any doubtful or questionable place, with the hope of being unknown, for someone would point me out in a moment. I wonder where I could get to without being perceived. I say I wonder, but I do not want to discover. Where could a well-known preacher go without being recognized? I sat with a good brother minister one day in the midst of a pine plantation, on the top of a hill, which is quite a ways from the usual haunts of men. We were talking together about the things of God, and I was saying, if we deserted our Master where could we flee, so as not to be known? I said, “If we sat long enough even in this lone spot, I dare say some person would come along who would know us.” Almost immediately I saw the head of a man moving among the pine trees and watched him coming up the hill. I said, “I should not wonder if a friend of ours is coming now.” It was a brother who sits in the right-hand gallery, come to search for a secluded spot for a picnic. Yes, he had found us out; we could not get anywhere without being known. You and I had better keep our regimentals on, and go through with the war and never be ashamed—for we cannot go away incognito. The day is past in which we can be hidden. If you

are a Christian and have declared yourself out-and-out for Christ, never think of going back; for you cannot, without having the finger of shame pointed at you. In the district where you live you have become enthusiastic for the conversion of souls, you have lifted high the banner of truth; you have declared that for Christ and Him crucified you desire to live and die. Well, then, my dear brothers and sisters, you are bound to go forward even to the end! Else many a man and maid will point their fingers at you and say, “Did not we see you in the garden with Him?”—and how will you answer, if, afterwards, you are seen serving self and this present evil world?

III. That leads me to the third point, to which we have climbed up insensibly, namely, this—**WE ARE NOW THE SUBJECTS OF EXPECTATION.** As we have been in the garden with Jesus and we have been seen there, we are now the subjects of very high expectations. That is to say, people expect a great deal from those who are known to be associated with Jesus. They are very unreasonable, sometimes, and expect far more than they are warranted in looking for—and consequently much more than they will ever get. I have known some to expect young Christians, who have just come to Christ, to be perfect—to know everything, to be able to preach a sermon, pray in public, give a five pound note, and listen patiently to all the nonsense everybody chooses to talk. Well, they may expect what they like, but they will not get unreasonable things. Should we expect from another what we cannot render ourselves? In these days they expect a man to do everything and then to attempt more. When you have toiled from morning to night and laid yourself out in your Master’s service—time, talents, substance, everything—somebody will snarl because you cannot do what he demands of you. The mercy is that we are *not* the servants of *man*—we are the servants of *God*. And if we please our Master, that is quite enough for us. One Master is enough for the best of servants. If we are popular in heaven, we may wisely be indifferent to the judgments of men.

Unreasonable expectations we are not bound to meet. But there are expectations which are just and righteous. Men are quite right in expecting that, if you have been with Jesus, your character should be affected by association with Him; for, first, you make a very high profession. You say, “I am Christ’s.” Well, then, they come to look at you and see what Christ’s men are. If you are in an ugly temper, they will say, “Surely, this is not the work of God.” If you are awfully stingy and never give anything away, they will conclude that it is not desirable to be a Christian. If you are sarcastic and find fault with everybody and everything, they will say, “That is not a very beautiful spirit.” They are right, are they not? Can you blame them for thus judging? Do you know how to turn a dirty penny in your business? That is no credit to the name of Christian. If you promise to send work home on Saturday night and your customers do not get it till a fortnight after, they will set small store by your Christianity. No one will think well of your religion if you do not tell the truth. When your word is passed, be sure that you keep it, or you will discredit your Lord and Master. I am not going into all the ways in which a man can so act in common life, as to lead people to exclaim, “That is not what we should have expected of a man that talks of following Jesus.” They have a right to expect a good deal from our sacred profession. What is our religion? Is it a semi-moral religion, like Mohammedanism? No, it is a holy religion that would make you perfect if, by the grace of God, you followed it to its ultimate issue; for it sets before you this as the object of ambition—“Be you perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Such a faith as ours ought to bring forth the noblest form of character. And when it does not, I do not wonder that the world is disappointed, and in its indignation speaks sharp things of us and of our faith. They have a right to expect a great deal from the disciples of such a Lord. Such a Leader! What ought not the followers to be? Such a Savior! What should the saved ones be? What manner of persons ought we to be who serve the holy, harmless, undefiled One?

Beloved, they may well expect great things on account of our comrades, with whom we are proud to be numbered. Consider who they were that went before us—those holy men and women who counted not their lives dear unto them. How faithfully they lived and served the Lord Jesus! Many of them went in a chariot of fire to heaven, burnt quickly to death for Christ’s sake. We are bound by our associations, bound by our Master, bound by the truth of God we believe. We are bound by the profession we have made, to live, not as other men, but as men who are of noble lineage. Men lifted up by a second birth, twice born, the elect of God—redeemed from among men—that we may be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.

IV. So, you see, we are brought where the world expects a good deal of us and when the world does not get it (that is the fourth point)—IF WE DISAPPOINT SUCH EXPECTATIONS—THE QUESTION MAY BE VERY PROPERLY PUT TO US, “Did not I see you in the garden with Him?” It is a salutary thing for a man to know that his inconsistency is observed; then he begins to see himself as others see him. It is very painful, very disagreeable, but, at the same time, very likely to bless the man. A man is apt to get a little angry about it; but it is a good thing for him to know how his conduct strikes other people. I have read of an old lady who gazed into a mirror, and remarked that they did not make good mirrors nowadays, for those which she used to look into, fifty years ago, showed her quite differently from what she now was; she said the mirrors were very inferior in these times. When the world observes that your character is inconsistent, it may be that it is a truthful mirror, although it does not exhibit your beauties but shows up your wrinkles and blotches. Do not quarrel with the mirror but quarrel with yourself. Depend upon it; you are disfigured with spots which you need to get rid of. When convicted by your conscience of an inconsistency, even though the conviction comes to you through an unkind, ungenerous remark of a wicked man, yet still take the lesson home and go to God for divine grace and forgiveness and begin again. A very plain-spoken enemy may do us ten times more service than an indulgent friend.

Such a question as this should effectually recall us to holiness—to deep repentance of the past and to strong resolves for the future. I will imagine that a certain Christian man has come to town for a holiday, and during the season of his holiday in London, he is asked by a friend to go to a questionable place of amusement. I will imagine that he yields to the invitation and goes—though I am sorry even to imagine such a thing. Well, he has gone where he should not have gone. And I should like some venerable minister, some saint of God, to meet him in the street as he comes out, and say to him, “Did not I see you in the garden with Him?” What a rebuke! How it would cut him to the heart! I have heard that even professing Christians, when they go over to Paris, will go where they ought not to go. And they have pleaded, as an excuse, that they wanted to see the manners and customs of the Continent. To put it in plain English, they want to join in with the manners and customs of Satan! You have no more right to go into wrong places in Paris than in London. I should quite as soon be seen in a theater or a music hall in London as in Paris. Indeed, I am told that our home production is by far the safer of the two. You have no right to go anywhere where you are ashamed to be seen by Christian people, or by the whole world. We are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses in heaven and in hell, and we should mind how we act. Take that to yourself, if you have crept into the devil’s dominions on the sly. Someone will catch you there and say, “Did not I see you in the garden with Him?”

And if you are ever tempted to conceal your religion, then I hope that this question will come whistling in your ears, “Did not I see you in the garden with Him?” I have sometimes been obliged to a wicked world for what it has done to inconsistent professors of religion. I remember a young man, in my early pastorate, going to a certain place of doubtful fame, and in the midst of a dance, somebody cried out, “That is one of Spurgeon’s people! Fling him out of the window!” And out he went. I felt grateful for that act of discipline from the adversary. I wish that they would fling out of windows all among the people of God who dare join with the world and its evil pleasures. Those who were gathered in that assembly felt that they did not want the company of a downright hypocrite, and so they put him out of their synagogue. If you should ever be found in “gay company,” or even in respectable company where evangelical doctrine is at a discount, I hope you will have things made uncomfortable for you; if you hold your tongue and are quiet, and try to be one of the clan where Jesus is dishonored, I hope this question will fall into your ear like a drop of burning lava, “Did not I see you in the garden with Him?” Stand up for your Master in all companies and in all places, or else renounce His service!

Now, I am going to use this question very briefly in several ways.

The question may be put to a person by a friend who is very anxious to see him decided against the evil tendencies of the times. The only way of dealing with evil, according to the Scripture, is, “Come you out from among them: be you separate.” When expediency pleads, “Do not come out. Make friends with error and be liberal,” then may the admonisher ask, “Did not I see you in the garden with Him?” Your hope is fixed on Him that died without the gate—will you not take up your cross and go without the camp bearing His reproach? “Did not I see you in the garden with Him?”

The question may apply again, when a friend is hard at work for Christ, and under difficulty, requires your help. Laying his whole life upon the altar, he is hard put to it for need of money, or for lack of personal assistance in teaching or preaching, and he appeals to you—he says, “You have something to spare, help me, for the Lord’s sake, for whom I am striving with all my heart and soul! I am in a difficulty, come to my help.” When you turn away and coldly say, “No, I cannot afford money or time,” he might well ask, “Did not I see you in the garden with Him? Have you not had fellowship with the Lord; and will you not have fellowship with His servant in His work?”

It is a good and profitable question. I should like, at this time, to speak to some here whom I have never before spoken to in my life, and introduce myself, and beg for their sympathy and aid, saying to them, “Did not I see you in the garden with Him? Did not I notice you at the prayer meeting? I think I saw your face light up at a certain part of the sermon, as if you enjoyed it. Did I not see you in the garden with Him?” A kind of freemasonry exists between Christians; if we meet with any that have been with Christ, it is, “Hail, fellow! Well met! You are my brother, whatever your opinions may happen to be upon minor points.” Oh, you that have been in the garden with my Lord and followed Him in the time of His shame, you are a brother of mine for I saw you in the garden with Him, and I rejoice to acknowledge the everlasting kinship! Give me a place in your sympathy. Mention me in your prayers.

We will put the question also in one other way—we will use it as an inquiry full of cheer to a faithful heart under depression. Yonder tempted believer cries, “I am half afraid that I really cannot be a living child of God; I am very dull and drooping and distressed.” My dear brother, years ago we used to have fellowship with you in joy and peace, in hope and song; not so very long ago you came out of the house of prayer, saying, “It is none other than the house of God, and the very gate of heaven!” You are down in the valley now; but, like Jeshurun, you were likely to ride upon the high places of the earth. Pluck up courage; you may now be in the desert with your Lord, but you have been in the garden with Him, and you will be again! Those bright days will come back. For dark nights last not forever. You have become sleepy and dull and, perhaps, Laodicean and lukewarm—but the Lord will revive you! Remember the old times, the days of heaven upon the earth, the Hermonites and the hill Mizar. Hope on, hope ever. He who has been with you will be with you yet again.

“Did not I see you in the garden with Him?” I should like to be welcomed with that question as I enter the skies at the last. I should not object to have that spoken to me by some bright spirit as I pass through the pearl gate—“Did not I see you in the garden with Him?” “Yes, bright seraph, you may have seen me; and now you see that He casts not off His poor friend in the day of His glory.” The angel of the Lord saw you when you repented, he spied you out in that little room where you wept alone because of sin. Upstairs in the solitary chamber where you told the Lord how father and mother were opposed to you, and yet you meant to follow the Lamb in all the ways of service and obedience, you were “seen of angels.” Beloved, the brave adherence of the least of our Lord’s disciples is seen, known, and remembered in heavenly places. In the last great day you that have been with Christ here, and trusted Him amid the clouds, and the darkness, and the derision—you shall see Him and reign with Him—and He shall acknowledge you as His, since you were in the garden with Him in the day of His humiliation. God bless you! Amen.

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